

Decline in Freedoms Means the Church Must Arise in End-Times Power

To everyone still sleeping through the communist takeover being deployed around the world, consider this your wake-up call. Governments, intelligence agencies and “woke” organizations are increasingly suppressing our freedoms and stifling the advancement of the kingdom. If the church in every nation fails to arise, we face the threat of going underground or becoming extinct.

In February 2021, after a year of fighting lawsuits and threats of fines and jail time, congregations in California finally got a Supreme Court ruling to reopen churches at 25% capacity with COVID restrictions on masks and social distancing still in place. The Supreme Court declined to rule on whether singing was a health risk. Dissenting Justice Elena Kagan called COVID-19 a “raging pandemic” and stated, “Under the Court’s injunction, the State must instead treat worship services *like secular activities* that pose a much lesser danger.”

On Easter weekend, Canadian pastor Artur Pawlowski stood firm against six police officers whose “[C]oncern was that the people in attendance were not adhering to the government’s COVID-19 public health orders, which are in place to ensure everyone’s safety.” Pawlowski was arrested on May 8 for conducting in-person services that violated restrictive virus safety restrictions. He is the second pastor in Canada this year to spend time in prison for disobeying public health orders.

If this isn’t enough to sound an alarm, consider the recent story of a minister, on a college campus in the United

Kingdom, who was reported to an anti-terrorism watchdog. What was his crime? Informing his students they did not need to agree with LGBT ideology. Wow, who would've thought? A man of God teaching Bible truths on a Christian campus is reported as a terrorist by the institution and fired from his post. Unbelievers and outsiders never had a chance to pick up a rock before he was "stoned" by religious leaders.

One of the Canadian pastors appeared before a judge to give his statement against accusations of being a political revolutionary. He said, "I realize that's the way society is going to perceive what's happening here, but I'm simply here in obedience to Jesus Christ, and it's my obedience to Christ that has put me at odds with the law." If this isn't a prophetic moment in modern times, then I don't know what is!

Twice, the apostle Peter was called before the Jewish Council and sternly warned against preaching the gospel. The first time, Peter and John were on trial for healing a man and preaching salvation in Christ. There was no denying the miracles, signs and wonders that followed these ordinary men. Since the Jews could not convict them, they admonished them to stop teaching in the name of Jesus. "But Peter and John answered them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot help but declare what we have seen and heard'" (Acts 4:19-20). Thereafter, Peter and the other apostles replied, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29b).

What glory awaits these courageous ministers at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ! They represent a true form of Christianity in the last days. Resisting oppression, forfeiting earthly reputation and comforts, and throwing off cowardice—these men are examples to us all. Everyone in the church should be cheering them on and encouraging any pastor still suffering from COVID anxieties to open their church. Take off the masks and serve Communion, lay hands on those in need of impartation and healing, put faith to the test and see

what God will do!

Even in the midst of a pandemic—arguably the most political and one of the least virulent among healthy populations—there can be no reconciliation, no treaty to silence the Gospel of Jesus Christ or stop the gathering of His saints. Why should churches remain closed while large retailers, liquor stores and clubs continue business as usual? How is it BLM can riot in the streets but houses of worship suddenly pose the greatest threat to mankind?

As for ministers who still have a platform, are they really restricted to preaching politically correct sermons? Why would anyone who made saving souls their life's work stay silent as LGBT people perish? What threat is made right by allowing sinful people to bring God's judgment upon themselves without warning? The church has nothing to gain by complying with any overreach of powers. We know we are living in perilous times when those in the church consider our movement "nonessential." We should not be running away but instead hurrying toward the battlefield.

"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though some strange thing happened to you. But rejoice insofar as you share in Christ's sufferings, so that you may rejoice and be glad also in the revelation of His glory. If you are reproached because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified" (1 Pet. 4:12-14).

Waiting for the rapture, reclining in compromise and false peace, watching believers slip into lukewarm territory—all brought on by poor interpretations of Scripture—must be stopped. Bad end-time theology, indifference and insecurity cannot continue to interfere with our true identity. We are a 21st-century church with first-century DNA. We are born again

of the same Holy Spirit as the apostles. We can perceive the thoughts of God and walk in the same anointing. God made the Spirit-filled man and woman the most powerful beings in the earthly realm and put His authority in our mouths. We are God's *ekklesia*, His arbiters of truth, legislators of righteousness. We were divinely appointed to be on the earth for such a time as this.

If the church lacks direction, guidance or an action plan to navigate end times, we simply need to look in His Word. The Great Commission has not changed (Matt. 28:19-20). The Bible is still profitable for teaching, reproofing and correction (2 Tim. 3:16a). Jesus Christ is still the way, the truth, the life and the only way to the Father (John 14:6). We still should not cower in fear when facing tests, trials or tribulations, knowing our Savior has overcome all these things (John 16:33).

I hear the Lord still asking, "When I return, will I find persistent, overcoming faith in the earth?" (see Luke 18:8) {eoa}

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